

ASCC 2009 ...

# 'Ordinary' Cattle Yield Extraordinary Results

*Missouri duo wins final quarter, overall 2009 honors in carcass contest.*

by **LAURA NELSON**,  
industry information specialist,  
Certified Angus Beef LLC

"We're feeding calves the same way everyone else does," Pete Mitts says. "There's nothing really special about them; they're just cattle."

A modest cover-up — most would call a load of calves that grades 56.4% USDA premium Choice and 35.9% Prime with 92.3% meeting *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand standards anything but "just cattle." Nevertheless, Mitts and John Osborn have been working on feeding these "ordinary ol' cattle" together near Savannah, Mo., for more than a decade.

That pen was extraordinary enough to win the fourth-quarter AngusSource® Carcass Challenge (ASCC) for the Northeast region. The Mitts/Osborn team won overall top honors in the annual contest with their 92.5% CAB and Prime entry from the third quarter. The fourth quarter's top pen came in second for the overall contest.

"We don't have any magic formula for feeding calves to make them Prime. You've got to do that genetically," Mitts says. They've done that by stacking genetic traits that focus on carcass quality, birth weight and growth potential in their herd females and then reaping the rewards in the feedlot and packing house.

Osborn signed on with CAB last spring as a Feedlot Licensing Program (FLP) partner yard. He feeds cattle drawn only from known sources — all of whom use Angus females from his or Mitts' herd genetics — and all are AngusSource-tagged. Osborn owns and manages the feedyard; Mitts serves as his CAB quality assurance officer and consultant, drawing on years of experience in the feed business.

Another group of Missouri cattle

claimed the third and fifth places in the 2009 ASCC. With CAB and Prime combined rates of 90.5% and 89.9%, Mike Kasten, Millersville, Mo., wasn't far behind his Savannah neighbors. Kasten has fed cattle with the Garden City, Kan., Irsik & Doll Feedyard since the 1990s. His cattle topped the first- and second-quarter contests in the Central region.

GG Genetics, Ida Grove, Iowa, filled the fourth-place spot for the year with its second-quarter-winning pen of steers. Mason Fleenor fed progeny from Angus bulls produced in his seedstock business to an impressive 90.2% CAB and Prime combination rate. GG Genetics was honored as the CAB Small Feedlot of the Year in 2009 for Fleenor's dedication to improving carcass quality in his yard.

Nationwide, CAB acceptance rates hover around 20% — child's play for the top winners in the ASCC. AngusSource director Sara Snider says that proves the value of the breed. "The AngusSource Carcass Challenge shows what Angus genetics can really do. Compared to industry average, the acceptance rates and percentage of Prime cattle that these AngusSource calves were able to achieve show how these genetics deliver quality time and again."

In its second year, the 2009 contest grew in entry numbers and quality. In 2008, all cattle entered in the ASCC averaged 42.3% CAB and Prime. A year later, 39 contest entry pens from across the nation averaged 61.3%, more than 40 points above industry average.

Mitts says he and Osborn use the carcass contest as just another means of gathering information on their cattle and how they measure up in the industry. They use that to hone their herd to perfection — a mark that seems not too far out of reach for them.



Pete Mitts and John Osborn use the ASCC as another way of gathering information on their cattle and to see how they measure up in the industry.

But again, that's nothing out of the ordinary in their minds. "There is an awful lot of information available for anyone who wants to use it," Mitts says. "We didn't have this kind of information when we first started buying bulls. Now we have EPDs, \$Values and tools that use DNA technology, too.

"Folks aren't taking advantage of the amount of that kind of information that's out there. If they were, everyone would be producing the ultimate cattle — Prime, Yield Grade 3s. That's where the money's at," he points out.

Snider says all the ASCC winners are shining examples of how to put good information to use. "The AngusSource program's main objective is to document

the Angus genetics of the feeder calves and replacement heifers enrolled." As feeders are purchasing cattle they can look at the EPDs and \$Values for the sires of the calves they are purchasing, she explains.

"The more information we can share through the production chain, the better we can manage the cattle and target the CAB brand, which puts more money in producers' pockets," Snider says.

The 2010 ASCC is already under way, with first-quarter contest entries wrapping up in March. For more information on the contest or the AngusSource program, call 816-383-5100 or visit [www.angussource.com](http://www.angussource.com).



## AngusSource® Gateway enrollments gear up for 2010

It's that time of year again! Spring is right around the corner, bringing warmer weather, a new calf crop and the busiest time of year for the AngusSource® Department. Last year more than 17% of the 122,760 head enrolled during fiscal year 2009 were enrolled in March.

Why enroll? Enrollment in AngusSource or Gateway can open doors to new marketing avenues and are two of the lowest-cost verification options in the industry. Some packers have guaranteed age-verified premiums through May of 2010. In order for feedyards to capture the additional dollars, the calves they harvest must be enrolled in an approved program, so the demand for age-verified calves should continue to be strong.

According to data from Superior Livestock Auction, AngusSource calves sold June through September 2009 earned an average \$2.65 more per hundredweight (cwt.) than non-verified calves, and an additional \$1.08 more per cwt. than other age- and source-verified calves sold through Superior Livestock Auction's video sales.

Once enrolled, producers have access to the AngusSource/Gateway online listing site where they can promote their cattle to more than 600 buyers who have subscribed to receive the weekly e-mails. Producers may customize their listing to

include additional health and management information. This marketing support is available free of charge!

### Getting started

If this will be your first enrollment, visit [www.angussource.com](http://www.angussource.com) to download the manual and enrollment forms. Once you have read through the manual and completed the forms, simply mail or fax them to AngusSource.

Copies of the required records must be faxed or mailed for all new enrollments and producers who are re-enrolling. These are records that pertain to the calves you are wishing to enroll and include calving records, semen receipts and lease agreements. Additional records may be required and vary from enrollment to enrollment.

Once we have received the necessary paperwork, we will complete your training and calf enrollment via phone. After the enrollment has been approved, we will order your tags and issue the verification certificate.

If at any time you have questions, please contact AngusSource at 816-383-5100. We look forward to helping you add value to your calves!

— by Sara Snider, director, AngusSource